THE UNIVERSALIST *Leader*

A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY FOUNDED BY HOSEA BALLOU IN 1819

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Continuing the CHRISTIAN LEADER and its predecessors (1819 to 1897), the UNIVERSALIST and its predecessors (1827 to 1897), the GOSPEL BANNER (1835 to 1897), the UNIVERSALIST LEADER (1897 to 1926), and THE CHRISTIAN LEADER (1926 to 1953).

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The bond of fellowship in this church shall be a common purpose to do the will of God as Jesus revealed it and to co-operate in establishing the Kingdom for which he lived and died.
To that end we avow our faith in
God as Eternal and All-conquering Love,
The spiritual leadership of Jesus,
The supreme worth of every human personality,
The authority of truth known or to be known,
And in the power of men of good will and sacrificial spirit to overcome all evil and progressively establish the Kingdom of God.

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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

February, 1959 — No. 2

On our cover, we are happy to present another new Universalist church home. This is the First Universalist Church of Binghamton, N. Y., dedicated toward the end of 1958.

Beryl D. Cohon, Rabbi of Temple Sinai, Brookline, Massachusetts, and for a decade greatly respected teacher of Judaism and the Scriptures of Judaism at Tufts University, is the author of the excellent essay, **The Common Denominator Is Not Enough.** Rabbi Cohon, a wise and courageous liberal religionist, points out the dangers of well-meaning, but superficial eclecticism in religion.

Albert F. Ziegler, minister of the First Universalist Church of Melrose, Massachusetts, continues his discussion of *Foundations of Faith* with chapter two, **The Heart of the Matter.**

Edmund Lambeth, member of the Binghamton Universalist Church and a member of the editorial staff of the *Binghamton Press,* kindly sent us the story, **Binghamton Universalists Dedicate New Building.**

Twelve Universalists from nine states contributed the symposium, **Universalist Laity Discusses Merger.**

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The Common Denominator Is Not Enough

Beryl D. Cohon

THERE is a growing number of people — good, intelligent men and women, thank God for them — who are in rebellion against their inherited religions. They feel cramped and suffocated in the formal trappings of their faiths. They cannot endure the narrow scaffoldings of their creeds. The established, formal religions, they feel strongly, divide and separate the children of man and create dissention in the world: too much ecclesiasticism passing in the name of religion, too much racialism, too much dogmatism. They would rise above the battlements of warring creeds, their eyes on far horizons. "Hath not one God created us?"

They do recognize that there is a great deal of good in every religion, as well as much that is unworthy. They would lift all that is good and create a new religion — one universal faith, a religion that shall heal the wounds of suffering humanity, a religion that shall not offend the mind, a religion that shall give wings to the aspirations of free men for the Kingdom.

There is a common core of the sacred in every religion, they reason. They would find that common core and build new, stately mansions for the soul.

I hope that all of us are in complete sympathy with this rebelliousness and this aspiration. We are in a growing world; our minds and our ideals must grow with the world. In my prayer book is the following petition; I would make it the petition of all people:

> O Lord, open our eyes that we may see and welcome all truth, whether shining from the annals of ancient revelations or reaching us through the seers of our own time; for Thou hidest not Thy light from any generation of Thy children that yearn for Thee and seek Thy guidance.

The aims of these rebellious men and women — and I hope we are among them — are altogether good; but their approach to the problem is bad. They are taking the wrong fork in the road.

The fact is that we cannot find a common denominator, and, if we do find the element in common, it will give us not one living universal faith, but a crazy quilt of many patches. Living, vital religions are not made by lifting patches from the various religions and putting them together in what we think is the basic pattern of all faiths. That leads only to a new cult, and further division — another story to the crazy Tower of Babel. It is like resorting to Esperanto: all it achieves — at most — is adding one more dialect to the thousands of dialects of mankind.

Of course, the religions of the world have a great deal in common; religions grow out of human needs, and human needs are basically similar in many areas of human life. But we cannot build a universal religion on what we choose to identify as the common denominator of all religions. That way lies only artificiality and more divisiveness.

For example: All men are physiologically alike basically — the same organs, the same physical processes. Every human has two eyes, two ears, two legs, two arms, not three; one nose, one mouth, and so on and on. But because all men have the same organs, put together the same way, because all men follow the same basic drives for food, shelter, sex, does not mean that all men are alike, that the differences do not matter. No salesman would remain in business very long if he had one and the same approach to all his customers. The physicians, the psychologists, want to know the minute variations. The human personality is infinitely varied, and in this variance is its true genius.

The Rabbinic sages have a vivid metaphor for human differences. They speak of a mint turning out coins — thousands of coins, each coin like every other coin. One cannot be told from the other. One penny is like every other penny. But, they reason, while all men come from the same mint — the same Creator — no two men are alike. They differ not only in their

physical proportions and contours, but, especially, in the shape of their minds, in the bent of their talents. In these differences lies the true genius of the human personality.

Again: We drive up to a lunchroom on the highway and order a quick snack — the favorite American dish — a hot dog with all the *fixin's,* or a hamburger with relish, mustard and all that. We top it off with a cup of coffee and we are on our way. We have had our meal.

Compare this with another meal. We are presiding at our Thanksgiving dinner, surrounded by our loved ones and choice friends; or we are at a birthday dinner, or at a wedding dinner with our bride by our side. The common denominator of that hot-dog meal and the festive meal is the same; fats, carbohydrates, proteins. Precisely the same, from the standpoint of the basic chemistry. But there is a difference, and that is not in the common denominator, but in the larger aspects of our lives: the love, the devotion, the sentiments, the loyalties we relish at the festive dinner. Or, shall we settle for the chemistry, which, materially, is the common denominator?

Even from the standpoint of chemistry there is a good deal of difference: difference in proportion, difference in combination. But, are we satisfied with a materialistic combination? Of course, both meals satisfy our hunger. But is it our physical hunger only we seek to satisfy at our Thanksgiving or wedding dinners? The very meaning of our lives are in the extra, invisible elements of these meals.

I submit that it is a true illustration of the religious problem that faces us when we seek to reduce all religions to one common denominator. Granted that we can find such a denominator, there are other considerations, equally precious; cherished traditions that bring us long memories and stimulate eternal hopes; symbols that radiate the sacred, proportions and combinations and emphases of values each religion makes for its adherents. The Cross means something precious to the Christian, which it not only does not have for the Jew but which represents something altogether different — perhaps even frightening — to the Jew conscious of his history. The Torah, the Perpetual Light, mean something to us Jews that they do not mean to the Christian. The details of the Communion table mean something precious to the Christian, but are devoid of meaning for non-Christians; the Passover table holds symbols that are fragrant to Jews, but which hold only casual meaning to the cultured non-Jews when they are explained to them. It is in these distinctive symbols and traditions and ceremonies that each religion holds power and purpose for its faithful.

No, the common denominator is not enough.

I believe that all religions should join us Jews in our Day of Atonement confessional: "We have sinned, we have transgressed, we have done perversely." The religions of the world have yielded to the sins of the world. In the powerful language of the King James Version, all religions — like Ephraim of old — went awhoring after strange gods. They have been opportunistic when they should have stood firm, immovable as the Rock of Ages; they have been more concerned with worldly pomp and power, with the vindication of sheer superstition, self-glorification, self-righteousness, than with doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. They have been looking backward, sanctifying all that is old, rather than raising their eyes unto the hills and far horizons. Religions — all religions — have fallen short of their professions. In justice, it must be said that so have the sciences, so have the arts, so have our systems and institutions of education. Have they not sold out — over and over again — to the idolatries of the world: success, popularity, racialism? Are not the major battles of racialism today fought on college campuses, in the schools, with most of our teachers lining up on the side of reaction? Yes, churches and synagogues have betrayed their faiths at times; so have the colleges and the schools! Who is poisoning our children, our grandchildren yet unborn, with atomic fall-out — the religionists or the scientists?

God's blessing upon those who are in rebellion against the narrow and divisive and superstitious in our respective religions; but in establishing a finer, truer temple of faith, they must not settle for any so-called common denominator. It is the wrong fork in the road. That way lies only mediocrity — the quick hot-dog snack rather than the festive dinner with our beloved.

The road to take is the one that leads inward, within ourselves, and follow our own best thinking, our own finest feelings, for the Kingdom of Heaven is within us. Let us revise, cleanse, reform and reformulate our own inherited faiths, instead of snatching patches from here, there, and everywhere. That will give us only a crazy quilt of many patches, and that will give us only another artificial, external and superficial front, not a dynamic, living faith.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. . . ." *Thy* God, and the God of *your* fathers; and in seeking Him honestly, earnestly, we shall not only find *Him,* but meet our brothers of other faiths who, too, are seeking Him.

Foundations of Faith

II The Heart of the Matter

Albert F. Ziegler

ONE of the two horses we ride is mottled, his colors shifting and various. But, we are not disturbed by this, nor does it cause us to disown each other as brothers in the faith, because we know that harnessed to this bewildering beast, in each case, is the pure white steed which is the faith of Universalism. What is the nature of this second animal? If the expression of the faith differs among us, and may, because the unity of the faith itself makes us a fellowship, it is surely vital that we be well aware what this common faith is.

Even as recent as fifty years ago, there would have been doubt on this matter. In 1907, John Coleman Adams in *Short Studies in the Larger Faith* still defined Universalism, to use Whittemore's phrase, "in the same sense in which it has always been used." He did feel it necessary to enlarge on it as belief in "a universal Father, a universal Brotherhood, a universal Saviour, a universal scheme of Good, a universal triumph of Good over Evil"; universal salvation, somewhat developed since its inception, but still unmistakably Universalism. Since that time, there has been a progressive clouding of the basic nature of our faith. As our fellowship responded to the needs of particular times and the persuasion of other liberal churches, as we became more active in the living of our faith than in the teaching of it, incidental elements of our gospel usurped the throne. Expressions of Universalism came to be taken to be Universalism itself.

Some of these incidentals that developed paranoic tendencies were liberalism, rationalism, social action, universal religion. Universalism had always been liberal in that it needed to break with orthodoxy to proclaim its own unorthodox gospel. But that liberalism never was, nor can it properly be, all of Universalism. One who is a Universalist need not be unorthodox *in every other phase of his religion.* Equally, one who is unorthodox, liberal, is not by that token alone, a Universalist. In much the same way, while Universalism always has required that reason be used in the seeking of religious truth, Universalism cannot be characterized merely as rational religion. This limits it unnecessarily and is irrelevant to the distinguishing characteristic of the faith. The products of reason may or may not be Universalism; and Universalism may very well require something more than reason for its basis.

Universalism naturally finds expression in social action, but it cannot be maintained by or contained within social action alone. Social action is the fruit, not the sustaining root. A universal religion may quite naturally become a part of a faith which does not require specific rites or creeds for salvation. But again, this is the fruit of our faith, not the faith itself.

In all these ways and more, we have tried to describe our faith, saying that "Universalism is liberalism" or "Universalism is reason in religion" or "religion in action" or "religion for all man." These elements are all good; it may be they are natural incidentals to our faith; but none of them wholly contains that which excited our predecessors as "universal salvation."

John Murray preached that God so loved every person "as to purchase you with the price of blood, of the precious blood of the Lamb of God." God saves through Christ, and that salvation is effectual in the life of every soul. Murray's theology was in no way different from Calvinism except in the climax. Hosea Ballou, with a freer use of reason, made basic structural changes in the Christian theology to support his version of the Universalist gospel. Man did not fall; he was not created perfect. Man is created innocent and moves toward virtue. Christ is not God but a divinely created model of God's will for all men. All men are drawn irresistibly to goodness by their own Christly nature. The messages of Murray and Ballou were in different terms, so much so as to provoke Mrs. Murray to make her famous warning to her husband's

congregation, but both had a like effect. Both preached a boundless, *unconditional confidence in God's loving will for all men;* Murray, by teaching of an effectual universal savior, Ballou, by teaching of the certain binding of each man's will to the will of God. Each in his own way expressed religiously what Bruce Brotherston, in *A Philosophy for Liberalism,* called "a basis for confidence."

Like his Universalist predecessors, Dr. Brotherston had a deep, driving concern to free men's minds from the fundamental fears, the cosmic doubts, which orthodox Christianity allows if not encourages. This is the real nature of Universalism; *it is a religion of ultimate and overwhelming confidence.* It expresses the cosmic security of which man must be assured for joyous and creative living. God is loving; that love is sovereign. As Universalists, we do not need to be converted to this. We believe it, or we would not still be a fellowship. But we have been content to take it for granted for so long that we almost have lost conscious awareness of its importance to us, to our Church and to other people. We need again to become acquainted with and excited about our faith.

Because our expressions of this basic Universalism may and do differ, our reaquaintance with it must be on a sufficiently hospitable level to include us all. In effect, what we seek is a philosophical basis, which each of us makes into a religion in those terms most workable for him. This was the quest Dr. Brotherston made, finding his answer at last in a theory of human nature and the nature of the universe. Too briefly stated, the theory is (1) that there is in the universe an all-pervading, creative force that works to bring an even greater unity of all creation, and (2) that this force is the urgency in all men, which is the life, and the only life, in them. Dr. Brotherston is not wholly consistent with this theory in his book; sometimes he seems to write as much to convince himself as the reader. The Universalist faith has always been, and must always be, a faith, not a proven fact; a bold conviction, without demonstrable evidence. We will look in vain for conclusive proof, but man unceasingly must strive to buttress his hopes with science and logic, and *we must have a reasonable foundation for our faith.*

The function of religion is to so postulate on the unknown and unknowable elements of man's relationships with himself, with others and with the universe, that he is rendered capable of the best living of his days. Calvinism attempted this by removing ultimate concerns from the area of man's effective consideration. Man can neither know nor effect his destiny. The judgments of a transcendent, sovereign God are beyond man's comprehension, much more beyond his influence. ". . . neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." However effective this proposition may have once been, the time came when man's growing awareness of his reason and abilities made him bold to challenge such a mechanistic view of his life. The basic difficulty in Calvinism was its hopelessness. Some persons were predestined for salvation, their lives justified; but most would be damned, destroyed. Neither the salvation nor the damnation were because of the person's efforts, nor could a person have any indication which his fate would be, whether his life was utterly worthless or a part of an eternal experience.

There were two historic answers to Calvinism. The first was Arminianism, whose offering was hope. The salvation or damnation of man is dependent on his faith and works. God wants all to be saved; he offers salvation to all. Man may avail himself of this blessing by right belief and right conduct; he deprives himself of it by error in faith and deed. Taking it at its most merciful, Arminianism postulates, in effect, two Gods; one, of good, the other, of evil. These two Gods vie for man's loyalty, one for the salvation of man, the other to his destruction. It is not so much that God damns, as that He sorrowfully acknowledges the supremacy of the devil in an individual and must abandon him to his inevitable damnation. The sovereignty of God is radically impaired by the freedom of man's will to choose against the divine will.

Calvinism was never troubled by a problem of evil. Whatever was or was to be, was the will of God, since God was all-powerful. There was no good or evil, there was only that which was, and no benefit could be had from trying to do anything about it. With the hope that was brought by Arminianism there came also the conflict of good and evil, and the towering difficulty of the problem of evil. How can evil exist in a world made by God? God must be dependable and capable; the fault must be in his creation, which, though made perfect by him, was, curiously, made free of him, capable of deterioration; liable, even susceptible, to wrong choices. This fault is no small one. It may have started in the minds of the theologians as only a slight crack in the impregnable wall of God's sovereignty. But if an all-powerful God is, in any degree, subject to defeat, he is no longer all-powerful. If man can, in any degree, by any means, be free of God, the ultimate victory of God's good will for him is thrown into doubt. The crack widens to a chasm, and hope is all but overwhelmed by doubt. The possibility of man choosing salvation out of a

free will is overcome by the equal possibility of his choosing destruction.

Freedom is a hallowed word with us. We covet the liberty to move, a man, not a puppet, among men. We find all meaning in life in the power to give freely of our abilities. But when we want freedom from the will of our creator, we are asking not creative liberty, but aimless confusion. The infant will of man cannot, alone, win his salvation in a universe he can neither know nor control. We do not know, of our own sensate abilities, what is in every way good for us, even supposing that if we did, we could of our own efforts bring it about. Our whole existence, its inception and its continuance, is possible only because we are controlled beings in a controlled universe. Freedom of the individual will is desirable and possible only as it is freedom to serve a will capable of a purposeful rule of creation. We want to be free only because, among imperfect beings, the efforts and inclinations of every individual are needed for the closest approach to truth. But who would want to be free of ultimate truth? If God is truly God, creator of all good, sovereign of life, purposeful sustainer of the universe, man's greatest joy and success must be in close compliance with his will.

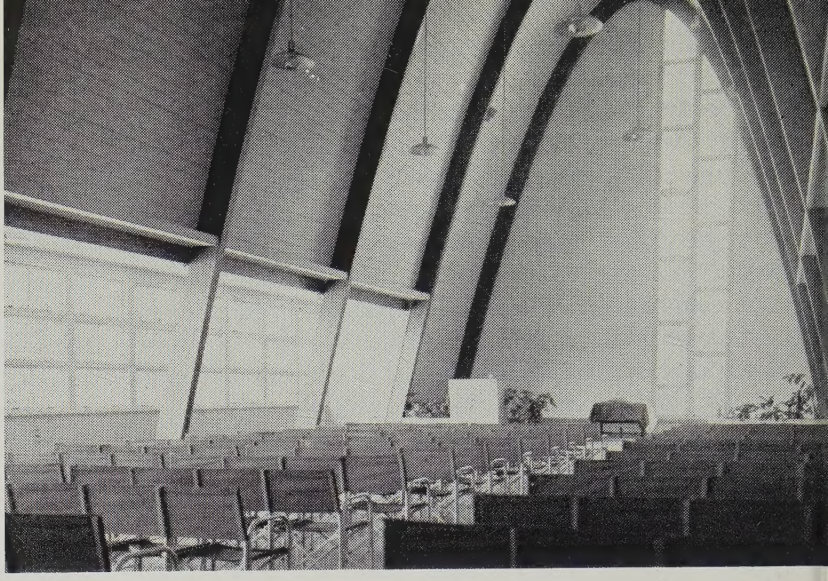
Arminianism recognized this, but, faced with the problem of evil, it surrendered hope to logic and concluded that man is free even of the will of God. God will plead, he cannot command; but a person may deny the plea even against his own good. It was on this last point that Universalism, under Hosea Ballou, presented its strongest objection to Arminianism. Universalism was the second answer to the hopelessness of Calvinism. A religion of hopelessness does not serve the living needs of reasonable man; but a religion of hope, with ample room for doubt, is scarcely more effectual. If man is free to the degree that he can decide against his own best interests, free to damn himself forever, subject to suicidal mania on the spiritual level, then hope for oneself runs thin and suspicion of each other poisons human relations. We must have hope and freedom on the material, temporal plane, but, ultimately, on the spiritual plane, we must have confidence, the assurance that is based on a glad knowledge that we are lovingly guarded, even against ourselves, by the power of God.

The confidence that is Universalism derives basically from a belief in the nature of man's spirit as healthy, without suicidal bent or ability. Man is spiritually indestructible. John Murray expressed this in a clumsy adaptation of the orthodox Christian theology. God so loves man that when the salvation of individuals is in peril by their sinning, he provides a divine whipping-boy whose vicarious atonement forever and continually regains for them the salvation they sinned away. Hosea Ballou spoke more clearly to us by finding his confidence in a faith in the natural works of a sovereign God. God builds perfectly and for eternity. He makes nothing liable to destruction, not even to self-destruction. Man, being a creature of God, must be of such a nature as to live, not die. God, being sovereign, cannot fail through the inability of any of his children to live eternally. Arminianism, in answering Calvinism, sacrificed certainty for hope, thereby opening the door to doubt. *Universalism redeemed certainty as confidence, confidence in the good nature of man as the product of a loving, all-powerful God.*

Present-day Christianity still maintains, almost exclusively, the Arminian view. Salvation depends on the individual person. He is drawn on one side to good, on the other to evil. His choice, whether morally or doctrinally, determines his success or failure in life, here and eternally. Good and evil are abroad in the earth. Each man must choose between them, for the salvation or to the destruction of himself and the world. The will of God is given more or less weight in the struggle, according to the different varieties of this gospel; but, in all, ultimately it may be defeated in individuals or in the world by the forces of evil. Strangely, even the greater part of liberal Christianity agrees with orthodoxy on this gospel of doubt.

Liberalism has attacked orthodoxy on every ground, in varying degrees of completeness, except on the ground of the basic gospel that is taught. Liberalism has protested the form of doctrines, but not the fundamental doctrine. It has derided the manner in which the teaching is expressed; it has not challenged the truth of the teaching. Liberalism has not been concerned with denying the orthodox postulation of a dual nature of existence; on the contrary, it has represented it. Its only quarrel with orthodoxy has been that the conflict of good and evil, the cosmic doubt as to the fate of life and of individuals, are not clearly discernible in the holy fog. Liberalism has never opposed the orthodox teaching, but has sought only to make it even clearer and more incisive. Universalism must stand in opposition to any form of Arminianism, whether of orthodox or liberal form. It has the same quarrel with both. It contends, whether the contention be expressed in orthodox or liberal form, that there is but one sovereign power in the universe, that man is the creative creature of that power and that his good destiny is forever assured.

Binghamton Universalists Dedicate New Building



Edmund Lambeth

THE official dedication of the new building of the First Universalist Church of Binghamton, New York, took place on Sunday night, November 9. Willem deVries, building committee chairman, presented the church to the congregation. Willis Hull, moderator of the church, led the congregation in dedication acceptance. The Rev. Richard M. Woodman, pastor, welcomed two former pastors who journeyed to Binghamton for dedication ceremonies. They were the Rev. Benjamin B. F. Butler of Seneca Castle, pastor of the Binghamton Universalist congregation from 1903 to 1908, and the Rev. Russell W. Lockwood of Muncie, Indiana, whose pastorate ran from 1950 to 1954. The structure was dedicated in three days of ceremonies highlighted by the Sunday visit of the Rev. Philip Randall Giles, D.D., of Boston, General Superintendent of The Universalist Church of America and the Rev. Angus H. MacLean, Ph.D., dean of the Theological School at St. Lawrence University in Canton.

Their appearances, Dr. Giles at a morning service, Dr. MacLean in the evening, were preceded by a Jubilee Dinner Friday night, prepared in a modern, fully-equipped kitchen and served in the church's combination dining-social hall. Greetings from the denomination were brought by Howard B. Gilman, of Syracuse, superintendent of the New York State Convention of Universalists.

On Saturday, Universalists opened the doors to its neighbors of all faiths in an all-day open house.

Occupancy of the new church brought to an end a twenty-eight-year era in which the congregation worshiped in an old mansion at 131 Front Street, which also served as a home for its minister. Although Universalists could be found in Binghamton as far back as the Civil War, the present society was incorporated in 1890. The congregation began feeling growing pains at the end of World War II, both from increasing membership and an expanding religious, social and educational program. Universalists needed elbow room. After study and deliberation the parish voted to build.

The dream that now stands as a reality at 183 Riverside Drive, Binghamton, began coming true one afternoon in 1955 when Universalist leaders dropped in for a chat with architect Charles Saldun. Approached on the design of a new church for Triple Cities area Universalists, the architect asked, "What do you believe?" The answer is reflected in a $150,000 sanctuary and education building located some five hundred yards north of the Susquehanna River. Its dominant feature combines a traditional sanctuary arch dramatized by a bold, modern roof which sweeps to near ground level. In short, blending what Universalists feel is the best of old and new ideas.

Church leaders and members, looking back on their cramped Front Street quarters, are noticeably and understandably elated with their new home. One can see it in the smiles of the women folk working in a spacious kitchen, at Sunday morning coffee hour, which often runs more than an hour and in the aura of beauty in the modern lounge. One can

see it in the Sunday school classes, where teachers have rooms and facilities to present their lessons and in the fellowship of study groups and church committees meeting at the new building on week nights. You can see it, too, if you're traveling near our area. Consider this article a "written invitation" to stop by for a visit.

Universalists of Binghamton turn to the work at hand and the years ahead remembering these words spoken by the minister at the ground-breaking ceremonies. "As we turn this earth to launch the erection of what will be a structure of enduring beauty and functional integrity, may our thoughts not linger on bricks and mortar, or glass and steel, but be lifted up to a vision of the living church:

. . . where free men might worship in fellowship and truth;

. . . where all seekers of life's noblest goals may find nourishment and strength;

. . . where concerned men might be supported and inspired in the task of building a living faith — a faith which sees religion best in the service of human need, in the enrichment of the human spirit, and in the enhancement of human dignity;

. . . where a God who cares most how men do unto each other may be worshiped."

WHY I AM A UNIVERSALIST

Fenwick L. Leavitt

We may want to feel that we are independent, but our tradition plays a very definite part in making us what we are. The line from which I came was a pretty independent lot. But, in spite of the diversity of opinions and attitudes which they voiced, they were not a divided people. They were solidly one in the common spirit which possessed them. They had what we call "unity in diversity." Perhaps, they heard the spirit of Dr. George DeBenneville when he said: "The inner spirit makes men feel that behind every appearance of diversity there is an interdependent unity of all things."

The tradition of my family was one that revolted against any human authority which tried to establish what might be called the "proper and right thoughts, beliefs or modes of worship." The inner voice of man was more important than the opinions of neighbors. They were not afraid to be in the minority if it was necessary to do and to believe what they personally considered to be right and true. Perhaps, they knew the words of the Gloucester people: "We cannot acknowledge the right of any human authority to make laws for the regulating of our conscience in any spiritual matters."

The tradition of my family possessed an old, but ever new, principle which was basic to their concept of religion. Perhaps, it came from the writings of Dr. Benjamin Rush, one of the most underrated leaders of our country during the American Revolution: "My Universalism is a new principle in the heart prompting to practical goodness."

And — these are part of my life today.

I am a Universalist because of my own personal theological conviction. I personally believe in a God who is a father of all mankind — excluding none. Since God is concerned with all men, we should be the same and should do all in our power to overcome the man-made lines which have been drawn to separate people on the basis of nationality, creed, or color. I personally believe that man was conceived in love — not in sin. We are not sinners dependent upon the grace of God, but children of God and able to lift ourselves out of every condition which we have created and to grow through understanding and education into harmony with all that is Divine. I believe that Jesus came and lived among men as a member of a long line of prophets who have appeared in every time and in every culture to point the way toward a way of life which is in keeping with the very best moral and spiritual values known to man. I, personally, feel that his greatest contribution will be known only when mankind seeks to put his teachings into practice. This would mean a tribute, much higher than that of worshiping him as God, to him as the spiritual and moral leader of our western world.

I am a Universalist, also, because of philosophical persuasion in regard to the present world situation. I feel that our greatest need today is for a unifying faith which will bring into reality a "One World" which will lift the people of the earth out of the darkness of bigotry and rivalry into the light of brotherhood and understanding. As part of a religious movement which has been dedicated from its foundations to such a thought, I see a tremendous responsibility upon our shoulders.

With such thoughts guiding my life, my restless and independent spirit feels at home and finds happiness and fullness in a lifework in the Universalist Church.

USE THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

AT the end of November, the editor wrote to a selected group of Universalist lay members, asking each to comment on the question, "How do you regard the proposed merger of Universalists and Unitarians?" Individuals thus approached were selected solely on the basis of good standing as active Universalists. With the exception of two of these, the attitude toward merger was unknown to us prior to receiving their answers. The two, whose attitude we did know, have not answered our inquiry. After we received their answers, we were reminded that Professors Robinson and Schmidt are also ordained ministers which we had actually forgotten. We printed their answers. Since we asked them, we decided not to rule them ineligible. The result is the symposium this month by twelve Universalists from nine states.

Following the symposium which we solicited, we present also four pages of thoughtful unsolicited letters. All of these communications we believe to be valuable contributions to a most important discussion, the question of merger. Consideration of merger calls for continuous functioning of the democratic process. A vital part of this democratic process is *a full and free and public discussion* of all aspects of merger. Our relative strengths and weaknesses must be faced frankly *before* merger. Our agreements and our disagreements must be exposed completely *before* definite merger plans are drawn up. The only successful merger plans that could ever come into being would be those resulting from agreements based on mutual information, both detailed and comprehensive. Such information, the Joint Committee has endeavored to present to both fellowships and will continue to do so. Our job then, the job of all the rest of us, is to study, discuss, and debate in good faith and in good spirit.

To this end, the columns of this magazine are wide open as they have been and as they will continue to be, subject only to reasonable space limitations.

Finally, we say again, we are not committed to merger. It should be unnecessary to add that this statement does not mean that we are, therefore, against merger as has been interpreted by some. *We are against any process that goes on the bland assumption that merger is, of course, inevitable.* Such an assumption would turn our studies, our discussions, and our voting into high faluting pretense that would betray the very democratic process to which both Universalists and Unitarians *are* completely committed.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

THE January mailing from Universalist Headquarters contains a call from the Committee on Official Reports and Recommendations *and* from the Committee on Resolutions for the next General Assembly to be held in Syracuse, New York, in October. The call is directed to state and regional organizations, national auxiliaries, individual members of churches and parishes, and ministers. We are invited to submit draft Recommendations and/or Resolutions to the proper committee on or before April 1. Recommendations or Resolutions can, of course, be submitted from the floor of the assembly provided a three-fourths vote to receive them can be gained from the delegates. The process takes time, however, and is designed only to meet emergencies, not sudden last minute thoughts.

To insure wise legislation in our Assembly and intelligent expression of opinion, both Recommendations and Resolutions need to be thought out and worked out carefully by the individuals and organizations presenting them, and carefully reviewed by the committees appointed to present them. Hence the time schedule. Both committees are made up of individual members who are widely scattered and must do much of their work by mail. April 1, therefore, is *not* too early a date for submitting proposals. The General Assembly convenes October 27.

Robert Bowman, chairman of the Committee on Official Reports and Recommendations correctly points out that Recommendations are "specific legal actions" of the church. Walter Royal Jones, for his Resolutions Committee, urges all Universalists to consider:

1. That The Universalist Church of America has *no better opportunity* to bear a corporate witness to the social and ethical implications of its faith, than through such Resolutions as are studied and approved by the churches and the General Assembly.
2. That as a body taking our religion seriously, we are under a moral obligation to bear such testimony as we can, in these areas, appealing to the heart and mind of man to choose the best he can envision.
3. That our witness amounts to little unless it truly reflects the convictions of our people.

We most earnestly second the requests of these men and their fellow committee members. Wise legislation for our organization and faithful witness to our Gospel require efficient use of limited time.

th Germany. A corner of the Wilhelmsburg Refu- Center at Ulm where Dr. and Mrs. Gustav Ulrich now working and where a 1959 workcamp group be assigned.

South Germany. Duane Heidenreich, USC worker in the Nordalb, with his tent group — 1958.

Universalist Service Committee Plans Three Workcamps in Germany

1959 WORKCAMPS — JUNE 18-SEPTEMBER 6

CAMP 1 "NORDALB" — Our workcampers will serve as counselors at a tent camp for refugee and city children who need fresh air, a good balanced diet and healthy recreation. This camp is located on the grounds of the Zeltagerrepublik in the Swabish Alps between Stuttgart and Ulm. Each Universalist workcamper and a German counselor share responsibility for a tent of eight children nine to fourteen years of age. There are usually one hundred and eighty-five boys and girls in this camp who are required to sleep ten and a half hours each night and rest two hours in the afternoon. Daily activities are organized on a tent basis with each tent group taking walks, playing games, singing and folk dancing.

CAMP 2 "ULM" — A group of mature and German-speaking workcampers will be assigned to the Haus der Jugend (House of Youth) at the Wilhelmsburg Refugee Center at Ulm. Campers will assist the social work staff in planning programs for refugee youth.

CAMP 3 "JUGENDWERK DRUHWALD" — Our workcampers will once again plan and execute leisure-time programs for one hundred and twenty emotionally disturbed young men, 13-19 years, who live at the Youth Home in Druhwald (near Soltau) in North Germany.

Each workcamper pays a fee of $600 which includes air transportation to and from Europe; board and room at the project. A personal travel period of about three weeks is scheduled in which the camper visits tourist attractions in Europe at his or her own expense. Applications for participation in any of these programs may be secured by writing to the Universalist Service Committee, 16 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Mass. Applications must be received not later than May 1.

ULRICHS AT ULM REFUGEE CENTER

Dr. and Mrs. Ulrich, our two Universalist workers, have arrived safely in South Germany to work with refugees at the Ulm Center. Before leaving West Berlin where they worked with refugee boys and children, they distributed the first shipment of shoes sent to them by Universalists across the country. A shipment containing a ton of mittens and children's winter clothing left Boston in mid-January for Ulm where it will be distributed by the Ulrichs. Before leaving West Berlin, Dr. Ulrich held a Christmas party for one hundred and eighty-five refugee boys and Mrs. Ulrich, a party for the toddlers in the Orphanage where she worked.

Universalist Laity Discusses Merger

To stimulate democratic discussion of merger and the use of the manual provided for all Universalist and Unitarian churches by the Joint Commission on Merger of The Universalist Church of America and the American Unitarian Association, the following letters are here printed.

These letters are in response to the following request, mailed to a selected group of lay Universalists:

"The pending question of merger of the Universalist and Unitarian denominations needs a very thorough discussion and airing if we are to arrive at a wise decision. I am therefore writing to a number of representative laymen throughout our denomination asking each one to write me a letter commenting on this question: **How do you regard the proposed organic merger of Universalism with Unitarianism?**

"Most of you to whom I am writing hold a position unknown to me on this question. You have been selected solely on the basis of your being loyal and active Universalist laymen."

Letters that come to us too late for inclusion in this number will appear next month. E.H.L.

Unities More Fundamental than Differences

I am, without reservation, in favor of the merger.

What are my credentials for speaking? Why should I be heard on this issue? *Positive:* Among my earliest memories are childhood experiences in the Congress Square (Portland) Church. From about 1902 to 1921, I was active in denominational affairs. I am a Universalist minister, ordained in 1912. I have made some original studies of Universalist history in the Middle West, and have been a contributor to *The Leader* since about 1911. *Negative:* Since 1922 I have lived in a part of California where the Universalist Church is almost non-existent and have depended for denominational contacts on *The Leader* and other publications. During much of this period, I have been inactive as a minister and might be classed as an isolated layman out of touch with the denomination.

When, in 1919, I became assistant to Howard Bard in San Diego, he told me that on the Pacific Coast differences between Universalists and Unitarians are forgotten. This I have found to be pretty much the case. It describes my own attitude. Large numbers of Unitarians in this western area are neo-Unitarians; they know little about either Unitarian or Universalist history. But they want to know. When I go to them as a Universalist minister (I try to make my status known), they frequently ask questions, or even ask me to speak, about Universalism. There is no suggestion that I am of a different breed from them.

Opponents have stressed our unique message which they fear would be lost under merger. What is our unique message? The Universalist message of Hosea Ballou after the American Revolution differed from that of John Murray before the Revolution. Our message after the Civil War gradually changed from that before the War; this is witnessed by a changed "profession of faith." And in many quarters, at least, I judge our message to have changed since the World Wars. Moreover, each denomination differs as much within itself as with the other. The Los Gatos Unitarian Fellowship is not Kings Chapel. The Charles Street Meeting House is not Divine Paternity, nor is Oakland, Santa Paula.

Messages intended for intelligent people have to change with changing conditions. Whatever is of value in our various messages, or (if you prefer) in our developing message, has a better chance to be remembered under merger than otherwise, for leaders of each merging group will do their best to make known the contributions of the other group. They will feel under obligation to keep alive an accurate knowledge of its history and peculiar insights. Thus, under merger, more people will know about Universalism than if we go our separate ways.

When I began to attend Universalist conventions, there were those among us who contended that as Universalists we must be Trinitarians. If any Universalist, or even if any Unitarian, feels that he must be a Trinitarian, there is nothing to prevent him, merger or no merger. The name *Unitarian* is an accident; Unitarian abandonment of Trinitarianism is incidental. Unitarianism has stood for individual and group freedom to explore and publish scientific or other scholarly findings with respect to facts and theories relevant to religion. The Universalist clause, "neither this nor any other form of words," implies the same assertion. This shared basis of union is far more fundamental than any differences of creed or custom.

My final point may appear personal, but it is not, since I do not know what individuals will be affected by merger. But I suppose that eventually there will be job-analyses, leading perhaps to reclassifications

and readjustments. Thus, it may well be that, consciously or unconsciously, some persons in both denominations are fearful of loss of position or prestige. Or, there may be others who similarly hope that merger will bring advancement. But these persons may be just the individuals who have intimate factual knowledge needed for our deliberations. Such persons ought honestly to probe their own motives to decide to what degree, if any, their private involvement disqualifies them as judges concerning the merits of the proposal. And the rest of us ought to be sympathetic with their predicament, asking ourselves to what extent our support of, or opposition to, merger springs from inconsequential and long-cherished personal prejudices, based on partial perspectives and blinding us to a broader vision of an unrestricted universalism.

— Elmo A. Robinson

Saratoga, California

We Must Understand Issues

The editor of *The Universalist Leader* has clearly stated, "We are not committed to merger." By the same token, every Universalist and every Unitarian should be committed to form a correct understanding of all the issues of the proposed merger.

It is important for both Universalists and Unitarians to know the historical backgrounds as well as the present status of the two movements. They should know all the points of agreement as well as those of disagreement.

It is always a mistake to go into a marriage blindly. A wise husband-to-be or wife-to-be should know many things about the family which he or she considers entering. But there can be the danger of too much hesitancy and doubt. He who hesitates is lost.

Both Universalists and Unitarians have all the opportunity they need to study the history and backgrounds of the two denominations. Such a study would give most of us a better knowledge of our own denomination.

Plenty of books and publications exist to give us all the facts. There are those among us who can tell the story of Universalism and Unitarianism, what it has been, what it is today, and what it can be in the future.

One thing we have in both churches, which isn't going to be something new to us, is democracy. We have the right to choose the type of leadership in each church that we want. Plenty of churches have suffered from the wrong kind of leadership because of the unwise calling of ministers.

There are many things that make the proposed "marriage" of the two churches a natural goal. We cannot afford to gloss over real differences. On the other hand, we cannot afford not to merge if that is the thing to do. Whatever we do, let's not lose out because of too much doubt and fear about the outcome.

— Henry W. Felton

Montrose, Penn.

We Need Both Denominations

How do *I* regard the proposed organic merger of Universalism with Unitarianism?

When the merger plans were first publicized, it was definitely to be a top-level matter, Departments of Publications, Education and Public Relations, with the possibility of other departments joining forces provided the first three joining departments worked satisfactorily. It was definitely understood that the proposed merger had nothing to do with churches on the local level unless such churches found it expedient, for economical reasons, to merge.

That concept, at least in Southern California, seems to have changed, many people having the fear that merger of the two denominations on an administrative level will mean the complete loss of local church identity.

The merger of some administrative departments of the two denominations, for economic reasons, makes sense to me, but to disturb the local level or eliminate either denominational name or to combine the two in any one name, does not make sense to me.

My feeling is that we can belong to a Council of Liberal Churches, possibly operated somewhat less elaborately than at present, and still retain our own denominational identity the same as any Protestant church belonging to the Church Federation or to The World Council of Churches.

I heartily endorse Seth Brook's philosophy that both Universalist and Unitarian denominations have historic backgrounds, have accomplished much in the past and are both definitely needed in the future.

In considering the coming vote on merger, it seems to me that too many people are letting personalities dominate their thinking. It is common to hear some Universalist say that he is against merger and when pinned down as to reason, it is because he knows some Unitarian he doesn't happen to like. Unitarians probably hear the same thing on their side; some Universalist has stepped on their toes, too. Neither argument can be considered liberal.

In the business world, we used to say, in discussing

co-existence with labor, "Co-operation isn't a beautiful sentiment, it's an economic necessity." The same applies to our two denominations, but on an administration level only.

Thirty years ago, many Universalists felt that "we had done our job" in liberalizing most Protestant churches and that we had better "fold our tents and steal away." All that has changed with the revitalization our denomination has undergone during the past decade, but there is still much to be done.

Unitarians admit that, for a time, they thought they had the logical solution to all the world's ills and just sat back and waited for John Q. Public to flock to their churches. When they found that approach, or lack of approach, didn't work, they got busy and did something about it. Their present activity in the creation of Fellowships and the acquisition of new members appears to be, at least in this area, somewhat superior to ours.

Our Universalist Advance program, now under way, however, should begin to show comparable results and I feel that great things are in store for us, provided we just get busy and work at it harder.

I think we need both denominations. There is too great a difference in our personal thinking to consider *complete* merger. I was born and raised as a Presbyterian, that is, until I married the daughter of a Universalist clergyman — then, I found satisfactory answers to many theological questions that had had me guessing for years, and, frankly, *I* still like to feel that I am in a *Church* on Sunday morning, rather than in a lecture hall.

— Holbrook Mulford

Costa Mesa, California

Merger Will Make Stronger Liberal Church

Received your note of December 3, and I have to admit that although I have not read the guidebooks on this proposed merger (but which I have purchased to read), I am very much in favor of it.

Anything that builds a stronger church should be of interest to all of our people, and certainly those of us in the liberal field need to strengthen our position. I believe that the merger of these two denominations will make for one which is much stronger than the two separately.

I have never felt it necessary to apologize for belonging to the Universalist Church nor to defend its position, but I do feel that as a minority group we need to do anything we can to strengthen our position and, if possible, bring us back to the very strong church that we once were.

Hope this is the sort of letter you want, and if there is anything you would like to change in it I give you perfect freedom to do so; except that I am very much in favor of merger.

— D. K. Hammett

Portland, Maine

A Rural Universalist on Merger

What I have to say about the proposed merger is the opinion which I hold without having discussed the issue in formal church discussion groups; our church in Lyons plans to do this soon. My present position is the result of observations, discussions and thinking, done over the past six years during which time I have attended the joint Biennials at Detroit and Atlantic City, been in contact with Toledo, Ohio, Unitarians and made a study of the Commission's *Manual and Guide*.

I am in favor of merger. I realize that there are certain disadvantages, but at this point, I feel that they are outweighed by the advantages. During casual conversations with fellow Universalists, I have found that, when considering merger, some seem to be basing their decision on such things as might be considered by many to be of little consequence. However, it seems to me that these things represent deep-seated feelings of individuals and need to be brought out and examined and discussed. One of the most frequently mentioned is the feeling of inferiority. Most of our churches in Ohio are in small communities and quite often their membership is made up of factory workers, farmers, and homemakers, with very few members who are professional workers. As a rule, the formal education among these church people is not as extensive as in the larger cities where most of the Unitarian churches are located. Moreover, in the rural areas, that portion of the family budget which is spent for clothing must of necessity go for a different type of clothing than that of the business and professional workers. It seems to me that all too often these differences lead to feelings which are translated to mean that we have nothing in common.

It has been my observation that if we have something of value to say or a sincere opinion to offer, it will, in most cases, be gratefully listened to even though it may not be expressed in grammatically correct English. Perhaps, then, one of the basic problems for us in the small rural Universalist churches is to make sure that we have something of value to bring to a merger of our groups and then our feelings of

inferiority may be dispelled by feelings of a mutual sharing in the forward movement of liberalism. I firmly believe that our churches do have something of value to bring to a merger.

Another thing frequently mentioned is fear of loss of identity with Universalism and fear that the small churches may be disregarded in favor of the larger ones. I, too, would feel a bit of sentimental loss should the new name we choose be entirely different. But since I came from the Methodist Church into the Universalist some twenty years ago, it might be easier for me to make this adjustment than for one whose ties are through long-standing family traditions. I do not feel that I can be severed from Universalism as long as my words and deeds still express it and surely living what we believe is a better expression than the name we give it.

The fears about the smaller churches seem very real to us in the Lyons Church. In this connection, the reorganization pattern seems to be very important. A regional division could be very beneficial to us as we are rather isolated Universalists situated here in the northwest corner of the state. My main concern is that one of the main purposes of any organization — state or regional — is to serve *all* of its churches in their differing needs. In talking with Unitarians, I have given some specific examples of help given our local church through our state convention and the office of the state superintendent and have asked what their regional office would offer us in the same situations. To date, I have been given no specific answers. While this is one area of merger which I will follow closely and do whatever I can to see that at least some of the things which I consider valuable are included when and if a definite plan for merger is presented to us, I feel that the chance is worth taking.

Something which seems to be very difficult for our people to understand is that the first vote to be taken is not the final one and if this vote favors merger, we will still have the opportunity to vote on and accept or reject a specific plan.

These are a few of the views of a lay person in one of the small Universalist churches in a rural community.

— Bulah Hinkle

Lyons, Ohio

Favors Merger for Liberal Strength

The question of the advantages as against the disadvantages of merger with the Unitarians is one that I have not, up to the present moment, been able to determine.

As a liberal religionist, I have always felt that it would give our movement strength to join forces for a larger organization better to spread the word of religious freedom. For this reason, I have favored merger.

I can realize that the actual physical merger would raise many obstacles and I doubt if any one person could truthfully foretell the eventual outcome.

It seems to me, however, that the goal (Greater Religious Liberalism) is more important than, say, the question of what would become of funds that would not be legally available for joint use.

I am not personally anxious as to what would become of the name Universalist, as I do not believe that a better word could be found to tag a real liberal movement.

The fear of losing our identity is not an important issue if we are sincerely interested in a liberal movement that will mean something to thinking laymen and women in the years to come.

This has been my thinking up to this time, but I am willing to hear and consider the other angles of this question and when it comes time to vote, I reserve the privilege of changing my mind.

It is doubtful if this letter will give you the information that you are looking for, and I believe there are many on the doubtful list like myself.

— Lester W. Nerney

Attleboro, Mass.

A Midwest Urbanite Comments

Your letter of December 3 has been unanswered until today for a variety of reasons. First, like most people, I kept putting it off, wishing to wait until some mythical spark of enlightenment would help me to answer your letter. Second, I was not sure that I could do a thorough job of putting down on paper my feelings on the subject of your letter. You referred to me as a loyal and active layman. I believe I can qualify in this respect and, therefore, it is necessary for me to very carefully weigh my comments in order to make them as effective as possible.

At any rate, here goes for my evaluation. To begin with, I have not been a Universalist all of my life. I became one after my marriage. Mrs. Baker has always been a Universalist. Through her interest I investigated and found that the Universalist church gave to me the type of religion that I wanted. It made a great deal of the idea of constant searching for new truths, expanding one's horizons, and promoting the efforts of the individual as opposed to waiting for

"outside" help or counting on miracles to solve the problems of our world.

Now about the proposed merger of Universalists and Unitarians. We have on many occasions visited many Universalist and Unitarian churches. For several years, I was in a travel capacity for the firm with which I am associated. In this period, I frequently found myself in cities from coast to coast where there were Unitarian or Universalist churches. At present, in addition to our membership in the Universalist church in Oak Park, we belong to a Unitarian fellowship in La Grange. We have many friends who are avowed Unitarians. As a result I feel that I can view the proposed merger on the basis of knowing many individuals and groups in each faith.

Without exception I have found a greater instinctive warmth in the Universalist churches. There was always a ready and indefinable spirit of welcome. In many Unitarian churches, this was not the case. It is this warmth or positive emotional impact which I believe Universalism must bring to a healthy merging situation. It is a difficult quality to capture in reasonable words, or to explain to nonunderstanding minds. It seems most necessary to me that we as Universalists not only be aware of this warmth, but be convinced of its necessity in a well-rounded religion. I am dubious as to whether that conviction is yet strong enough to survive the union with a more "logical" (more "intellectual") religious group.

To be successful the merger must be one of completely mutual acceptance. There can be no areas wherein either group is holding back. Enthusiastic approval of and respect for the ideas of each must exist. I have noticed several times in discussions of the merger subject that there has been a slight tone of condescension on the part of the Unitarians. For some reason there has developed a feeling that the Universalists must be "bailed out." I strongly doubt that this is true. However, if it were true and the Unitarians were in a position to do the "bailing" I would certainly expect it to be done with mutual respect.

Certainly there is a great area of philosophical thought in which we have much in common. We are the leading liberal churches in the world. The world needs us very much. Both churches have much to contribute and a merger should make it possible to be more effective. *If* this merger can be achieved with respect for both organizations and if it is motivated by the desire to be more effective, then I strongly favor the merger. *If,* however, the merger will create a feeling of subservience on the part of the people in our church; or a feeling that this is the only solution to our difficulties, then I strongly oppose the merger.

Some time ago I sat in on a meeting called for the purpose of considering a combined Summer Institute program for the local Midwest area. At this meeting there were representatives of both churches. Quite frankly, I was considerably concerned by the proposals that were made. The Unitarians said that they would be very glad to have us attend *their* institute. They had all of the program laid down and we could attend if we wished. I knew from many years of active institute work on my own part that we had developed a most excellent program for either a family type or a youth group type of institute. We were not asked to join in creating a new combined institute that would draw the best ideas and talents of both of the preceding programs. After a short time I lost interest and continued to bend my efforts in behalf of our own institute.

Perhaps I developed an extremely "thin skin" after this but I noticed from that point on that talks of merger were not being based on the idea that both had a great deal to contribute. The idea that a merger would create a truly great and effective single liberal church seemed to get lost in the shuffle.

I have heard that the Unitarians are more successful in that they have more churches and more money. To me that is a false criterion of success. The measure of success in the area of church functioning is found in the evaluation of what the church has accomplished for the many individuals involved — be they ministers or lay people. When I consider that I have had the privilege of knowing such men as Dr. Frank D. Adams, Walt Macpherson, Clint Scott, Phil Giles, John MacPhee, John Parkhurst, Stanley Manning, Earle McKinney, Al Perry and many more, I feel sure that the Unitarians by no means have a monopoly on men of outstanding ability. We have much to bring to this merger and we must be satisfied in our own minds that we do.

Not long ago I heard a lay member of one church say during a discussion of the merger that he was in favor of it because "it was the only way out." That is the type of philosophy that makes it possible for the Unitarians to feel benevolent and charitable towards their "poor relations." I feel sure that the real leaders of both churches view this proposed move as a means of strengthening both churches and becoming more effective. This belief must be dominant in the minds of all people. Together we could

do a real job of promoting the cause and need for the Liberal church.

We would have to work together, respect the achievements of each other, and build for the future. With this approach I would strongly favor a merger. It does seem to me that, at present, a merger would in all likelihood result in a serious loss of our own integrity, and as a consequence I cannot offer it my wholehearted support.

— G. H. Baker

Western Springs, Illinois

All Information Possible Necessary

Your letter dated December 3 and postmarked December 15 arrived yesterday and we are preparing to leave for Baltimore tomorrow for Christmas, so I haven't had time to compose a well-considered reply to your question: "How do you regard the proposed organic merger of Universalism with Unitarianism?"

At present, I don't know whether I am for or against merger. I am trying to keep an open mind until our church (Rochester) has studied the booklets prepared by the Merger Commission. This is too important a question to decide without being as fully informed as possible. Therefore, I would urge the careful study of the prepared material by our people in all our churches. Only after serious consideration of all the information we can lay our hands on, can we vote intelligently on what we have come to believe will be the better course to advance the cause of liberal religion. Any church failing to vote is betraying its heritage of faith.

— Beryl Haas

Pittsford, New York

Questions of a Connecticut Yankee

In response to your invitation I shall try to express, as best I can in brief form, my thoughts on the proposed organic merger.

I wish (as I suspect other lay members of both organizations do) that I had a better understanding than I now have of (1) what would be the nature of the resulting denomination, and (2) the procedure whereby the joining could be brought about. Such plans as I have seen have been skeleton outlines from which I have difficulty in trying to visualize the finished structure.

What is proposed is referred to as a merger rather than an absorption of one denomination by the other. Those who favor it have in mind, I'm sure, a homogenous organization not too greatly dominated by either Universalist or Unitarian philosophies and traditions, but rather a larger liberal church having greater influence and opportunity than either of the present denominations now enjoys. I assume they must feel that such theological differences as may exist are not of a sort which would require compromises so profound as to disturb substantial numbers of either Universalists or Unitarians.

My hope is that before either denomination votes finally in convention on the merger the ministers and lay officials of each local congregation will have satisfied themselves that their *communicants have had opportunity to become well acquainted with and to express themselves on what is proposed.* And I think it should be clearly determined in advance whether our several Universalist State Conventions — which, I believe, hold title to a substantial portion of our denomination's resources — would be willing and legally able to transfer title to those assets.

— George H. Prall

West Hartford, Connecticut

Only Questions Are How and When

After some hours with the excellent study material on the subject of the proposed organic merger of Universalism and Unitarianism, I realize that the problem is not simple. However, I am becoming more and more impressed with these observations, which seem to me to be valid:

1. We are both liberal in outlook and theological differences are becoming less important, particularly to the "younger generation."
2. Our children are being taught (in Rochester, at least) from the same course of study, by the same teachers. These children will always have difficulty in understanding where and why they should differ.
3. Our ministers and our people seem to hold as wide variations of religious feeling and expression within each denomination as might be expected between the denominations.

My conclusion is that merger is not only possible, but almost inevitable, in one form or another, and at one time or another. This seems to leave, for me, only the questions of the how and the when.

I am aware that merger will not answer all problems as by magic. I am sure that divergences of thought and practice will rise and rise again, and I would welcome this, for I would consider it a sign of life and vitality. It is my personal belief that there

are important advantages to be gained by merger, in greater numbers, in wider fields of interest, in greater possibilities of extension and expansion, and in elimination of duplicating services. I feel that these potential advantages are sufficient to justify a vote on my part for merger now.

— Louis B. Cartwright

Rochester, N. Y.

The Professor Approves Discussion

Thank you for the letter on the back of which this is being typed. I want to congratulate you on the letter and on the philosophy which motivated it. I think that it is a splendid idea, and I am looking forward to reading the article which will result from it. No doubt the reason for my receipt of this letter is due to the address slug which designates me as "Prof." This is, of course, quite accurate. However, I might also be designated, with no less accuracy, as the "Rev." It is for this latter reason that I respond only in this fashion, and not with the response envisioned in your letter. You would not want the reaction of a member of the clergy, even though not occupied with the ministry in a full-time capacity, in an article dealing with the reactions of the layman.

— Ralph N. Schmidt

Utica College, Utica, N. Y.

All to Gain and Nothing to Lose

In reply to your inquiry early this month, I am wholeheartedly for the merger of Universalism with Unitarianism. It seems to me that we have everything to gain, and nothing to lose. Apparently there are some differences in our churches, organizationally speaking, but there is little if any difference in our basic theology, and to me, this is the prime point in the entire question.

It seems to me that if we are true liberal religionists, then there is no serious obstacle in the path toward a successful and beneficial merger. On the other hand, if Universalists and Unitarians cannot band together harmoniously, then we fall sadly short of what we profess to be. I sincerely hope that the proposal materializes, because I believe it will ultimately benefit the cause for liberal religion, everywhere.

— Phil F. Carspecken

Wausau, Wisconsin

LIBERAL RELIGIOUS YOUTH ENDORSES MERGER

The Council of Liberal Religious Youth, the representative governing body of Universalist and Unitarian young people, meeting in Brooklyn, N. Y., December 27 to 31, 1958, unanimously adopted the following endorsement of the proposed Universalist-Unitarian merger:

"We, the Council of Liberal Religious Youth, after serious deliberation of the Merger Commission's pamphlet and other pertinent information, wish to make a public statement endorsing complete functional merger of the American Unitarian Association and The Universalist Church of America.

"As an integral part of the liberal religious movement and as representatives of the youth of this movement, we feel deeply our association with the denominations and their problems. We realize our responsibility to understand the issues involved.

"We do not know as yet how Liberal Religious Youth would be affected by such an action since the plan presented by the Merger Commission is not in final form. But — after consideration of our own experiences as a merged organization and an awareness of our place in the total liberal religious movement, we firmly believe that the factors of potential growth and development far outweigh the sacrifices and difficulties involved in merger.

"It is for these reasons that we present our endorsement for a complete functional merger."

INDICTMENTS AND INVITATIONS*

The daily Lenten Manual, *Indictments and Invitations,* currently in use in Universalist and Unitarian churches, presents selections from forty living authors, chosen and arranged with unusual skill by the editor, Robert L. Cope. Professor Cope's wide reading and good taste resulted not only in appropriate selections, but also structuring which makes this little book a genuine aid to personal, spiritual discipline.

The Council of Liberal Churches is to be congratulated on its 1959 Lenten Manual editor for the excellence of his work. He has, in fact, demonstrated that "God is at no time without witnesses."

**Indictments and Invitations,* 100 pp. — Lent, 1959 — Council of Liberal Churches. Price, twenty cents per copy in any quantity. June Burns, U.C.A., 16 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

O God of whom we ask so much, help us to listen sometimes for what thou dost ask of us.

— A. Powell Davies

Reactions Of Our Readers

NOTHING TO FEAR FROM MERGER

To the Editor:

I have been extremely interested in reading the recent article by Albert Q. Perry in the *Leader,* and last month's letters to the editor.

Firstly, I must answer Dr. Brook's question, "whether *any* Unitarians and Universalists are unreservedly for merger," with a loud *Yes!* He can't have asked it seriously. Dr. Brooks is too used to asking rhetorical questions from his pulpit when nobody can answer him back. Here in Minnesota, we have the Minnesota Council of Liberal Churches. Universalists and Unitarians co-operate within this organization with complete accord. The local Universalist and Unitarian churches differ from one another, as individual Universalists and Unitarians differ from one another. But there are no more differences between them than there are within their own organizations. Liberals in the twin cities area may go to any one of three liberal churches, or to one liberal fellowship. They join the one in which they feel most at home, most satisfied, where their individual needs are best met. Some few individuals belong to two of the churches simultaneously. It seems to me that this is the kind of universalist situation which should exist. Mr. Perry states that "the innate and historic mission of the church is to inspire love rather than to dispense truth." Perhaps so, but it is evident from his article that he feels such love is incapable of sufficient latitude to include in one national organization those who call themselves Unitarians. It seems to me that love is only sentimentality if it cannot include differences and work effectively within concrete institutions and among living people.

Secondly, I gather that what Mr. Perry is actually saying is that there are within both Unitarian and Universalist churches at least two personality types which may be called respectively "true Universalist" and "true Unitarian." The former is motivated primarily by faith, and the latter by reason, or to put it another way, by love and by truth. At the risk of burlesque, I would suggest that an appropriate example of the former, as Mr. Perry envisions it, might be Uncle Tom. However, it would seem to me that these two motivations are complementary rather than opposing. Justice must be enlightened by love, just as much as love must admit of justice. If I have interpreted Mr. Perry correctly in this paragraph, then I believe that there is some truth and insight in the naming of these different attitudes among liberals. However, such differences exist within Unitarianism and Universalism as well as between them, and should not be any obstacle to merger.

Finally, I must comment on the obvious inference that Universalism declined because its clergy were educated. First a point of fact. Whatever the experience in Cincinnati, the St. Lawrence Theological School graduated its first class of trained ministers in 1860, twenty years before the dates which Mr. Perry mentions. The school was founded by Universalist ministers and laymen who obviously valued education. Furthermore, Hosea Ballou, the grandnephew of the author of *Treatise on Atonement,* and his co-worker, urged as early as 1847 the founding of a denominational college. And surely the great Hosea Ballou himself, although self-educated, could hardly be called a foe of an educated clergy. Education of the clergy and a mass movement are not antithetical, as the Catholic Church with some 500,000,000 members is well aware. Do we now have a resurgence of "Know-Nothing" Universalism? However, the decline of Universalism, as I'm sure Mr. Perry is well aware, is a much more complicated matter. A more correct assessment of its decline is implied in the statement of Mr. Atwood Manley, Universalist layman and historian of Canton, New York, that "The Universalist faith has experienced the same vicissitude that nearly all of the other liberal denominations have in this country as other faiths mellowed and became more liberal in the interpretation of their creeds and professions." The Universalism of the nineteenth century is quite appropriate to a liberal Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, or Episcopal church of today, and, indeed, is somewhat too conservative and unreflective for some of them.

In conclusion, I would like to add that no local Universalist or Unitarian church which is itself strong has anything to fear from merger. We badly need a United Liberal Church of America.

— Richard E. Sykes
Minneapolis, Minn.

LET US GO ON OUR RESPECTIVE WAYS IN FRIENDLY FASHION

To the Editor:

My thanks to Dr. Reamon and Dr. Brooks for the candid and forthright statements of their attitude on the question of merger. As ministers of strong and influential churches, one a past president of The Universalist Church of America, the other the head of our National Memorial Church in the nation's capital, they are representatives of the thoughtful and constructive wing of our fellowship.

For many months, I have felt an urge to put myself on record in the same fashion, but as a minister in retirement and without a strong parish behind me as a sounding board, it seemed unlikely that any word of mine would have much weight. Now, however, I have been encouraged to speak. Like Dr. Reamon, I must confess to an earlier error in judgment, an error which I likewise sincerely and deeply repent. For nearly half a century leading up to seven years ago and despite certain misgivings of very long standing, I was strongly in favor of the union of our two denominations. I had hoped and believed that such a union, when accomplished on even and equal terms, would serve to accentuate and make more effective the salient and distinctive elements in our Universalist faith and philosophy.

What has come to pass, since 1951, within my own observation and as a part of my own experience, has served to change my attitude completely. In every instance where such merger movements have been in operation, the result has been the almost total elimination of everything positive and af-

firmative in Universalism and the emergence of the present type of negative Unitarianism.

The fundamental doctrines, which have always been basic in Universalism, have been so watered down as to be unrecognizable and quite without expression. This, I am convinced, is the case in general from the heads of our two denominations right down to the individual parishes and fellowships. Hence my conviction, which I am sure must be shared by thousands of others, is that any merger, however piously and legally effected, would mean the complete absorption of the Universalist Church and the utter extinction of all that has made it so precious to those of us who have given a lifetime to its service. I am not content to stand by and see that happen. Surely, there must be enough of those who realize what is happening that they will make their voices heard to clarify the issue and enable the rank and file (so confused by words and false emphases) to understand it and to vote intelligently.

As was so clearly pointed out in your editorial, we are *not* committed to this merger. Let us not do it. Let us go on our respective ways in cooperative and friendly fashion, each working in his own way and from his own point of view for the over-all objective of all men of good will — a world in which men can live together in peace and mutual trust.

— Frank D. Adams
Orchard Lake, Michigan

HE IS AGAINST MERGER

To the Editor:

I am writing you after much careful thinking before committing myself on paper over my signature.

For several weeks now I have had the two copies of *Merger and Alternatives — Study Guide Manual.* I have tried to read it with an open mind. Perhaps the Universalist Church means so very much to me because I came into its Fellowship on Easter, 1920, when I had returned from France after the conclusion of World War I. Often converts become more rabid than those who have been born in a fellowship or are citizens by birth. Be that as it may, I have tried these last ten years to see both sides of the fence and have tried to lift my eyes beyond the frantic immediacy.

Having read the *Study Guide* and *Manual,* I cannot help but feel that it is heavily one-sided, *all for merger.* The Unitarians beat loudly their drums and they are for the merger, by and large.

If those of us who do not see eye to eye about the proposed merger remain silent, we create the idea that everyone is for it, and as a result there will be no resistance. I for one am not for it. I am against it. I feel the merger will be a sugar-coated *coup de grace* for the church of my adoption because the Unitarians only speak one language and they are past-masters about how to absorb. They may be liberals, but they certainly do not know how to co-operate. If you do not join their chorus, you are a mossback, a reactionary, a has-been, and to sum it all up, an old fogy.

I believe the Universalist Church has a bright future if its ministers and lay people give it all they have, spend less time running around in the name of merger and spend their efforts and strength building their local churches. I have tried to do that these thirty years in Brooklyn, and All Souls is on the march, believe me.

The history of the Unitarian Fellowship from beginning to end can be described as "we Unitarians are it and have it."

I do not mind having my reaction published in your paper. I know some of our key men feel as I do. They have committed themselves in writing. Let us start the ball rolling by coming out through our denominational paper stating where we stand and why.

— Cornelius Greenway
Brooklyn, N. Y.

A GOOD WORD FOR MERGER

To the Editor:

After reading the "we-are-not-committed-to-merger" articles, as well as the anti-merger words of a few of our ministers in the *Leader,* I think it is time your readers heard a good word for the possible merger of the Universalist and Unitarian Churches. Lest the readers get the false impression that the bulk of Universalist ministers are opposed to such a move, I wish to say, I am totally in favor of such a merger!

Obviously, there are many Universalist laymen and clergy who are for merger, though Dr. Brooks may not have asked us, and we are not motivated by "convenience, expediency, fear of being impolite, or fear of being looked upon as outcasts" nor do we think that "Unitarians and Universalists . . . are poles apart," as he says. Rather, we are motivated by sincere dedication to a stronger, more effective and efficient, and unified liberal approach to religion in a time when our common cause is badly needed in a world of organized religion where "neo-orthodoxy" and respectable fundamentalism are the spiritual leaders.

There are problems in such a merger and there will be others, I have no doubt, but as in any marriage, we cannot solve them all short of actual union. Through such union, we will have the strength and combined facilities to solve problems and meet needs, if we have the ability to rise above misplaced sectarianism and self-centered historical parochialism. If we do not have such denominational abilities and self-confidence and faith in our fellow-liberal religionists, we will not survive long as separate denominations, let alone as a merged church. I believe in our separate strengths, but I hope more from those strengths combined.

This and much more prompts me to disagree with my few vocal colleagues, and to say again, I am for merger and for the future such a merger could bring to the Church that is the heart of my professional life.

— Max Coots
Canton, N. Y.

RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM WILL GROW WITH MERGER

To the Editor:

In reply to Dr. Brooks' letter in the December, 1958, *Leader,* I would like to reply that I personally am unqualifiedly in favor of merger of the Universalist and Unitarian denominations. I speak not as a recent newcomer to the denomination, but as one whose roots in Universalism run back through several generations. The notion to

study merger does not mean that we are opposed to merger. I believe that the vast majority of Universalists are strongly in favor of merger, here and now.

Admittedly our origins were different, sociologically, theologically, and philosophically. With Hosea Ballou, a blending process started that has gone on until today. We sing from the same hymnal, we teach the same church school curriculum, we train the majority of our ministers in the same theological schools, our youth have made a most successful merger. We could go on listing how we have worked together. Does this mean that we are poles apart?

Perhaps Dr. Brooks is speaking about his local situation. In the South Shore area of Massachusetts, where I live, we are *one*. We have a joint conference for the adult churches, a joint ministers' association, the oldest in the United States, and a Federation of LRY that is tops. Leadership in these groups is carried on by the chosen leaders whether they be Universalists or Unitarians. Presently our Federation, the Bay Shore Federation, is run by a majority of Universalist youth, because they are the leaders in popularity as well as ability. Again I say, on the South Shore we are *one* and our greatest problem is that our denominations are not merged. In the ministers' group, the differences are greater within the denominations than between.

Let's not kid ourselves. Merger is not going to be cheaper. If it is a good merger, it will be more expensive because it will result in greater activity and greater service to the churches. It will undoubtedly be more efficient.

Yes, I am for merger, and I'm for it *now*. I know there are problems and I have a few reservations, but they are minor in the over-all view. Religious Liberalism will go ahead much faster when the two denominations stop courting each other and become married.

I should like to close with a personal reaction to our denominational leadership. I believe that they are giving up their positions of leadership when they straddle the fence and say to us, "Study the plan and make up your own minds." It would help us to know how they feel personally about it. I am certain that they are not, for the most part, opposed to merger. Please, if they are our leaders, let's have them lead us. We had confidence in them to elect or appoint them to their offices, and we shall have confidence in them regardless of their views on this question. However, from their inner position at the core of the denomination, they can give us more than the cold facts as included in the merger booklets. Let us have their views in print in the *Leader*. We need them and we are capable of evaluating them. Please, let our leaders be leaders. We need their counsel now.

— William A. DeWolfe
Stoughton, Mass.

COMMENTS ON THE "MANUAL" AND "STUDY GUIDE" PREPARED BY THE JOINT COMMISSION ON MERGER

The *Manual* and *Study Guide* represent a great amount of work. It is a work capably executed, the material concisely and clearly presented. It is in fact an accomplishment by folks who were pressed for time and effective distribution. All persons interested in the matter of merger considerations are indebted to the members of the Joint Commission on Merger.

We, of the local churches, have been urged by denominational officials and by the Commission to implement the process of democracy by using the *Study Guide* and *Manual* to stimulate thorough discussion of possible merger. If the process of democracy is to be served fairly, then considerations of the matter at hand, namely the possibilities of merger and its alternatives, must be objective in all respects. Further, matters of opinion, which easily make their way into an evaluation of the facts, must be kept at a minimum, and conspicuously tagged as matters of opinion when their expression is permitted.

These comments on the *Manual* and *Study Guide* are made with reference to these two areas then, that of objectivity, and that of matters which are opinions.

A letter printed in the *Manual* on the page preceding the Table of Contents stimulated ambivalent feelings in me. It was written by Lloyd S. Luther, one of the Commission members, and expressed some things regarding the *Manual* and *Guide* that troubled him. The fact that the letter was printed in such an obvious place is to the credit of the Commission. Mr. Luther states that it bothers him that there seems to him to be a prejudgment in favor of merger in these two booklets. He continues to point out that this was natural, however, as a great majority of the Commission was in favor of merger. Now, if what Mr. Luther states has validity regarding the objectivity of the material, it throws considerable weight against the suggested study as a fair and effective implementation of democratic decision-making. The matter that is raised by Mr. Luther requires study.

The Commission states (*Manual*, Page 7) that "differences which separate become of decreasing importance, the likenesses of point of view, purpose, organization and operation increase in significance." Perhaps, this is the kind of thing to which Mr. Luther was referring when he mentioned prejudgments in favor of merger. Certainly, this is a matter of opinion, not of fact. This may be true, or it may not be. Yet, it is not presented in a way that distinguishes it from the presentation of factual matter and statistical information. Again, on the next page of the *Manual*, it is stated that "every step that can be taken to unite the religious forces of the world brings them nearer to a position from which the fulfillment of their mission in the modern world is possible." This is opinion, and could be interpreted to mean the uniting of religious forces, per se, without regard to their ideological perspectives, but it is almost certain that this is not meant in this statement. What can be meant, then? It would seem that here in the introductory material of the *Manual*, a certain groundwork is being laid to help the reader to attain a "let's-get-together" predisposition. I do not say that this was intended. I say only that this seems to me to be its effect. This same apparent effect is reflected in the *Study Guide*, when, for example, on page 23, the following statement may be found: "There is, of course, no possible way that either Unitarianism or Universalism could be characterized in theo-

logical terms." This is as extremist a point of view as any imaginable position. Writings published and distributed by both denominations and their local churches are filled with long and pointed statements that characterize Unitarianism and Universalism not only in theological terms, but by many other distinctive qualities. This seems to me to be a natural and healthy thing, and I would expect that any two religious groups, functioning as long as these two denominations have, would have characteristic theological distinctiveness. The *Manual* and *Study Guide* serve either to disavow this, or to operate in ignorance of it. I cannot believe that the latter is the case. Rather, it seems to me, that these materials present facts which are surrounded by and evaluated in terms of opinions, which, of course, are those of the Commission members. Mr. Luther's letter has helped us to understand the implication of the members' opinions. I mention this, because the Commission members have a right to their opinions, and we have a right to know what is opinion and what is fact, and in the case of opinion, to try to understand it.

The *Manual* lists on pages 74, 75, 76 and 77, "Advantages of Merger." It should be noted, that these do not necessarily represent the outlook of the Commission. Presumably, these come from many sources, as does the list of "Disadvantages of Merger" that follows on pages 77, 78 and 79. Whether they represent the outlook of the Commission or not, they are presented for study, and as opinions, they must be treated as such.

It is stated (*Manual,* page 75) that ". . . the basis of comparison is not on what the mass of members now believes, but rather on what present leadership expresses. . . ." Whether or not this is true, in the sense that this is the way some people are comparing the denominations, it seems to me to be something hardly worth defending. There is a need for more of our people to believe, to know what they believe, and to verbalize their belief. If they do not do so as adequately as we would hope, then, this does not lend substance to the validity of merger. It indicates, on the other hand, that the democratic, congregational polity of the two denominations needs strengthening, a thing on which a healthy merger must be dependent, not a thing to which we may look with reasonable expectation after the realization of a proposed merger.

This same page (*Manual,* page 75) cites as an advantage of Merger: "If merger does not come about, and assuming that co-operation continues to grow at the local and regional levels, the respective denominations may find themselves in embarrassing positions; moreover, if the co-operative process increases, there will be increasing confusion at the top levels, which may result in a slowing down of the advance of liberal religion." The implication here is that now that we have been considering merger for so long a time, have spent so much money on co-operative relations, and have publicized our joint activities, it would be embarrassing to withdraw. I cannot accept such an implication, if this is what is intended. Moreover, there seems to be no certain way of determining that any move toward merger and its alternatives, or away from these, will produce any greater or any lesser degree of confusion anywhere, and, surely, it is possible that many spearheads of liberalism, Universalist, Unitarian, and many others, aimed at the problems of our society, may be better than a "placing-your-eggs-in-one-basket" operation.

I suggest that the bulwarking of the causes of religious liberalism is not our whole task, nor should it absorb our whole interest, and completely determine our motivations in this consideration of merger and its various alternatives. Universalists and Unitarians, and many others are religious liberals, *utilizing a method* that must always characterize us. However, as a Universalist, I have presumed to feel that Unitarianism was more than religious liberalism, in that it has a distinctiveness which separates it from Reformed Judaism, and other religious liberals. I know that for me, *Universalism is something in addition to religious liberalism,* and that while I rejoice in the common ties with the brethren of Reformed Judaism, they are not Universalists. I mention these things, because it seems to me that the promotion of religious liberalism, rather than the promotion of the more inclusive concerns of Unitarianism and Universalism, seems to be the primary objective of the Commission. *If the Commission feels that Unitarianism, Universalism and religious liberalism are synonymous, then, I simply disagree.* If they feel that the particular concerns of Unitarianism and those of Universalism, apart from our common tie in religious liberalism, are worthy of consideration, then I do not find indication of this feeling in either the *Manual* or *Study Guide.*

— George J. W. Pennington
Concord, New Hampshire

MERGER REQUIRES MATURITY

To the Editor:

Dr. Seth Brooks shows commendable courage in voicing his misgivings on merger, putting aside any fear of being misunderstood as uncharitable.

It is to be hoped that advocates of merger will show the same courage, and set aside any fear of seeming to want to force issues or squelch controversy, when they deal critically with some of the afore-mentioned misgivings.

Much is being said about the uniqueness of Unitarianism and Universalism these days, and the need to retain their several distinctivenesses. Dr. Brooks puts it most generously as the value of two movements. But he does not specify just what differences he finds.

I have often wondered, too, if there were not a need for two liberal denominations, reflecting slightly different hands of the liberal spectrum. The one might most comfortably encompass that band which feels its closest ties with traditional Christianity; the other with a free-wheeling universality, humanistic in inclination, and tending towards an ethical culture emphasis.

I have wondered, about this, I say, not with any great enthusiasm, but simply out of practical considerations of religious psychology: the limits of tolerance which ordinary people can actually develop for differences in viewpoint.

If a case could be made that Unitarianism and Universalism in some way corresponded to this difference, I think that I myself might call for great caution in any plan for merger. But the plain fact is that neither of the

(Continued on page 53)

Legally, the Minnesota A.U.W. is still in existence, having been formed in 1903 as the Women's National Missionary Association and incorporated in 1909. At the present time, however, the State Association is inactive, the women's organizations of the two strongest churches in the state, Rochester and Minneapolis, having voted in 1955 to continue to support The Association of Universalist Women and to participate in its program, but to do so independently of each other. When the State Association suspended its operation, five hundred dollars was turned over to the parent organization to be held in trust for the state and the income to be credited as contributions to administration from the two local groups. All other financial support was to be sent directly from the two local Associations. This has been the procedure since 1955. The two groups have continued to support the over-all program in all respects, and both presidents receive all mailings which heretofore went to the State Association president.

Mrs. George Kelly, president of the Minneapolis Association of Universalist Women, an active organization with a day and an evening group, has sent reports on those local Association activities which she feels are most noteworthy. The A.U.W. contributed one hundred dollars to the Clara Barton Birthplace Camp Anniversary Fund, the proceeds of a successful garden party. Another project, which they have carried on, has been the collection of old nylon stockings which are sent to Japan for use in industries employing women.

One of the young men of the Universalist Church of Minneapolis, a University of Minnesota graduate, entered St. Lawrence University at Canton, New York, in the fall of 1958, to study for the Universalist ministry. This year, 1959, the Minneapolis church celebrates one hundred years of continuous service. In recognition of these two important events in the life of the church, at the first service in September, the A.U.W. president, Mrs. George Kelly, on behalf of the membership, presented a Centennial Scholarship of one hundred dollars to Mr. Tharold Olafson. Immediately following the service, Mr. Olafson left Minneapolis for Canton, New York.

Unity House

* * * *

Tri-U, the Unitarian-Universalist student group at the University of Minnesota, is being given financial support this year by the Association of Universalist Women.

The women of the A.U.W. feel it is of vital importance to have a liberal religious student group such as this carrying on an active program on the campus.

The current program includes open forums on such subjects as *What is Unitarianism-Universalism?*, discussion meetings with faculty members as advisers, and a play-reading group.

Unity Settlement House, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Unity Settlement House was founded in 1897 by members of the Universalist Church (then called Church of the Redeemer). This building was erected in 1912, and is still the main center of neighborhood activities, although not the only center. The program has changed to meet neighborhood needs, and staff workers from Unity House conduct meetings at schools, parks and elsewhere, as well.

The organization was privately supported until 1918, but at that time became a participating member of the Community Chest of Minneapolis. At the present time, sixty-five per cent of the support comes from the Chest, and the remainder from gifts, endowment income and membership fees. Our Association of Universalist Women has made many very substantial money gifts to Unity House; our sewing group (just disbanded last year) has contributed many thousands of articles of clothing to be distributed by the staff as the need arose. At present the Board of Directors of Unity House includes three women who are members of the Association of Universalist Women and nine men who are members of the Universalist Church.

"A resident camp is maintained at Amery, Wisconsin. Each summer about four or five hundred persons have an opportunity to visit this beautiful spot; outdoor activities, swimming, boating, hikes, nature study, handicrafts are among the most popular activities. This has been in operation since 1950. Two years ago a program of day camping was added for the younger children and those who cannot afford the minimum fees, or for whom scholarships can't be found. For many years, the A.U.W. contributed to sending individual children to the resident camp, also to Unity House itself. For the past two years, however, we have contributed three hundred dollars each year to help operate the new day camp. It has been extremely popular and we have enjoyed watching its growth. We contribute not only money, but also our personal attention. We are proud of Unity House, and also of our ties and long association with it."

— From an article
by Mrs. W. E. Balcom

While distance and the limited number of churches have made it unfeasible for the A.U.W.s of Minnesota to function through a state organization, the Minneapolis Association performs those services for the local church, the community and the over-all program for Universalist women which are part of any state organization program. It provides an opportunity for the women of this large church, coming as they do from many different sections of the city, to meet together and to enjoy excellent programs and fellowship.

— Nell Kelly, *President*
Minneapolis Association of
Universalist Women

News of Churches and Church People

AUGUSTA UNIVERSALISTS HONOR ROBBINS FAMILY

The Rev. and Mrs. Douglas Robbins and Carol.

The Rev. and Mrs. Douglas H. Robbins were surprised and honored by the people of the Winthrop Street Universalist Church, Augusta, Maine, on Mr. Robbins' twenty-fifth ordination anniversary and the fifteenth anniversary of his ministry at the Winthrop Street Church.

Mr. Robbins, who was born on March 20, 1905, at Wakefield, Massachusetts, was educated for the ministry at Tufts College; did graduate work at Yale University; and was ordained by his father, the late Rev. C. Guy Robbins, D.D., on December 17, 1933, in New Haven, Connecticut.

The anniversary program was based on a *This Is Your Life* theme, and was highlighted by the presentation of a poem written by Ira W. Bunker, of the Winthrop Street Church. The poem not only took the minister back, but took him back through life. The invocation was offered by the Rev. Kenneth C. Hawkes, minister of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Lawrence, Massachusetts, of which Mr. Robbins' father was pastor for many years. Felicitations were presented by the Rev. Milton M. McGorrill, D.D., Bangor, Superintendent of Maine, and Andrew Snyder, Gardiner, president of the Universalist Church of Maine.

Among "surprise" visitors were two aunts, Mrs. Irving Johnson of Camden, Maine; a cousin, Leon Johnson of Melrose, Massachusetts; a childhood friend, Mrs. Mattie Schonland of Lawrence, Massachusetts; and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Clerk of Lowell, Massachusetts.

Following the program a reception was tendered in charge of Mabel Redlon, assisted by Mrs. Ira Bunker, Mrs. Knowlton Hewins, Mrs. Walter Brennan, Madeline Hussey, Mrs. Ralph Ingraham, Stanley Weymouth, and Mrs. Arthur Bourgoine.

EUROPEAN TRIP PLANNED BY LRY

The Liberal Religious Youth through its American International Religious Fellowship (IRF) Committee is making plans for a 1959 Summer trip to Europe. Passage for twenty-eight students and group leaders, and Dr. and Mrs. Sidney Freeman, Charlotte, N. C. has been secured on the *Ascania* leaving New York June 18.

After their arrival in Cannes, France, June 29, there will be opportunities for small group travel in France, Germany, and Holland before the International Religious Fellowship Conference in England, July 18-25. The week following this conference, delegates will participate in special tours of England.

A study program will be held at Albert Schweitzer College, Churwalden, Switzerland, August 2-14. The study course will offer opportunities for both creative thinking in an "international" atmosphere and enjoyment of the Swiss countryside.

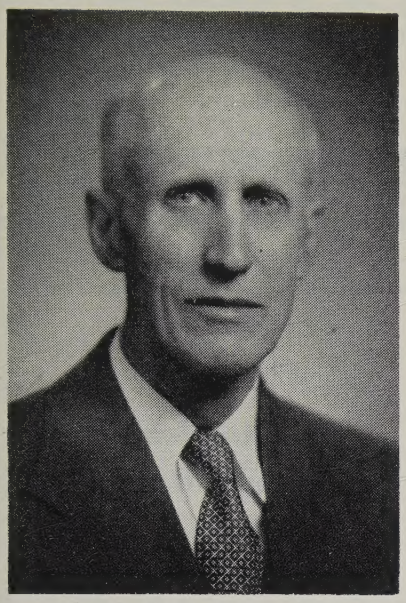
The remainder of August will be spent in small group travel in Switzerland and Italy. The group will return to the United States the middle of September. It is estimated that the cost of the LRY-IRF Summer trip (including passage) will be $850.00. This trip is open to young people in Unitarian and Universalist churches. Further information is available from the LRY office, 16 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts.

DR. GREENWAY THIRTY YEARS AT ALL SOULS

Christmas Sunday, December 21, 1958, marked the thirtieth anniversary of the pastorate of Dr. Cornelius Greenway as minister of All Souls Universalist Church, Brooklyn, N. Y. The anniversary occasion was marked by the reception of six new adult members and the christening of nine babies.

The trustees of the church had asked for twenty-five hundred dollars as a Christmas offering from the parish. The response was over thirty-two hundred dollars.

NEAL ALLEN CITED BY FELLOW CITIZENS



Neal W. Allen

On the occasion of his retirement from the office of chairman of the City Council of Portland, Maine, and chairman of the Planning Board, Mr. Neal W. Allen was cited for over half a century of service in the public affairs of his community. A life-long, loyal Universalist, Neal W. Allen has been labeled "Mr. Planner" by an appreciative public. Commenting on his career, the *Portland-Telegram* said in part editorially:

"If Maine should ever decide to give medals for distinguished community service, a jury would probably award the first one to Neal W. Allen of Portland.

"Diversity and length of service, however, are only part of the story. It is the quality of his service that commends him to every community in Maine as an example of active and productive citizenship.

"Mr. Allen's articulate and progressive leadership has been characterized by a high intelligence, a sense of balance, a keen grasp of the intricacies of municipal government. Only a man of great conscience and deep devotion to civic responsibility would have stuck at the job so long or given so much time and thought to countless thankless tasks.

"He deserves major credit for the success of Portland's professional planning organization. Rather than looking at it suspiciously as a costly, new-fangled idea, as did some old-line civic leaders, Mr. Allen saw in it an opportunity for orderly growth of the city, for the sort of wise and thrifty look-to-the-future planning so essential to a good business but so easily and so often avoided by a municipal government.

"And through it all Mr. Allen has remained modest, firm and enlightened in his leadership but never dogmatic, outspoken but always kind, forthright in adherence to principle but always tolerant of others. And somehow along the way he has managed to run his private business and raise a large family in the true Allen pattern of selfless dedication to community betterment."

MERGER REQUIRES MATURITY

(Continued from page 50)

present denominations represents such a division of liberalism, nor shows the faintest internal tendency to become one. Both stand squarely across it, and represent, despite unquestioned tensions, the inclusive liberal fellowship which I really believe is more desirable than the division would be.

Permit me to suggest that our discussions of merger at the present moment are being colored more by the tensions within our own fellowships, than by tensions across the denominations. It does truly seem to me that in all four camps, conservative Universalist, progressive Universalist, conservative Unitarian, and progressive Unitarian, each is identifying the *other denomination* with the disturbing group within its own denomination.

This is a pattern of anxiety which is emotionally understandable, but logically insupportable: it just doesn't correspond to the facts, at least, not as I have seen them.

It will take a stiff dose of maturing to enter into a merger with the Unitarians. But staying separate won't be any easier. Our real problem is that the Universalists, in one hundred and fifty years, haven't really succeeded in merging with the Universalists yet! We still have in effect a half dozen or so state denominations, not to mention the independence of the local congregations. The A.U.A. is not without its parallel problems. Merger gives us a superlative chance to grow out of a thousand obsolete institutions, and become a liberal church. It's more than just a question of economizing or streamlining organizations, it is the opportunity of a lifetime, for the emergence of a true liberal fellowship, serving the "fourth estate" of American religion (Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and *Liberalism*).

— Walter Royal Jones, Jr.
Gloucester, Mass.

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FROM A "BIRTHRIGHT" UNIVERSALIST

To the Editor:

If our Universalist Church followed Quaker custom I would be a birthright member. I yield to no one in my loyalty. Nevertheless, I am becoming increasingly concerned by the excessive amount of sectarianism that is appearing in the columns of the *Leader*. This does not represent the liberal gospel I was taught, either at home or in school. It is no preparation at all for the forthcoming vote on our future relationship with the Unitarian Church. It would appear to me that if we are to act intelligently and fairly on this important matter, you would be endeavoring to secure objective and impartial treatment of the issues.

— Harmon M. Gehr
Pasadena, California

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PRICE HEADS NEW YORK UNIVERSALIST PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

The Rev. John Edwin Price, minister of Chapin Memorial Universalist Church, Oneonta, N. Y., was recently appointed by the state executive board as chairman of the Committee on Publicity and Publications for New York State Universalism.

OBITUARY

Mabel Houghton Sykes

Mrs. Mabel Houghton Sykes, widow of the late Dr. Richard Eddy Sykes, former president of St. Lawrence University, died November 24, 1958.

Mrs. Sykes was born in Little Falls, N. Y., ninety-five years ago, the daughter of Emma Gay and Byron K. Houghton. She was educated at the local schools, Clinton Liberal Institute of Fort Plain, N. Y., and the Leroy Art School. After graduation, she taught painting in Little Falls.

When the Rev. Richard Eddy Sykes became pastor of St. Paul's Universalist Church in Little Falls, Mabel Houghton was a member of his congregation. They were married in 1888 and throughout the more than half century of their married life, Mr. and Mrs. Sykes shared the activities of the parish ministry in Little Falls and Dolgeville, N. Y., Denver, Colorado, and Malden, Massachusetts, and later, for seventeen years during Dr. Sykes' presidency of St. Lawrence University, Mrs. Sykes was the gracious first lady of the campus. Throughout his entire professional career, both as parish minister and as college administrator, Dr. Sykes was actively aided by Mrs. Sykes. Both were always active in community organizations as well as church.

During the later years in Canton, N. Y., in addition to her duties of college president's wife, Mrs. Sykes served for years as a trustee of Benton Library and for several terms as president of the Library Board. She was an active member of the local Universalist church and an enthusiastic member of the Garden Club. Until two years ago, Mrs. Sykes was active in her own large and beautiful garden at her home on Hillside Road, Canton.

For the last two years, Mrs. Sykes has made her home with her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph H. Michaels.

Mrs. Sykes is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Felix M. Frederiksen of Faribault, Minnesota, Mrs. Ralph H. Michaels of Canton, N. Y., three grandchildren, Joan E. Frederiksen of New York, Dr. Richard H. Michaels, Bergenfield, N. J., and Nancy H. Michaels, Canton.

Funeral services were conducted by Dr. Max A. Kapp of St. Lawrence University from the home of Mr. and Mrs. Michaels in Canton, Wednesday, November 26.

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SKINNER AWARD ESTABLISHED

The Massachusetts Universalist Social Action Committee establishes the Clarence R. Skinner Award to be given to the preacher of the sermon which, in the Committee's judgment, best expresses Universalism's social principles. The award will be given for meritorious preaching, not necessarily annually.

The recipient of the Clarence R. Skinner Award will be suitably honored at the annual meetings of the Massachusetts Universalist Convention. The winning sermon will be published and its author presented the sum of $25.00.

Closing date for the 1959 Clarence R. Skinner Award will be March 1, 1959. Manuscripts should be mailed to The Clarence R. Skinner Award Committee, 125 Mount Vernon St., Boston 8, Mass.

Rules:

1. Sermons submitted must have been delivered during the months for which the award is to be given, March 1 through Feb. 28.
2. Any minister or layman, regardless of denomination, may submit entries, but not more than three.
3. Manuscripts must be typed, double space, with suitable margins and with the author's name on the first and last pages.
4. Two copies of each sermon must be submitted. One copy may be a carbon.
5. Since the winning sermon will be published, suitable footnotes must be appended to all copyrighted material.
6. The winning sermon becomes the property of the Massachusetts Universalist Social Action Committee.
7. The decision of the judges will be final. Committee of Judges: Robert Knights, Chairman; Dr. Philip R. Giles, Rev. Frederick Libby Harrison, Mrs. Edward K. Hempel and Edward Hopkins.

A woman approached evangelist Billy Sunday after one of his sermons and asked pensively, "I wonder if you can help me? I have a terrible habit of exaggeration."

"Certainly, madam," replied Sunday. "Just call it lying!"

— *The Watchman-Examiner*

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NOTICES

CONNECTICUT FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Granted Letter of License to Mr. Dean Starr, Woodmont, Conn.

Letter of Transfer granted to the Rev. Burchard Royce to New York.

Accepted on Letter of Transfer from Illinois, the Rev. Arnold F. Westwood.

— HOWARD T. WHITE, M.D.
Secretary
January 8, 1959

RHODE ISLAND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Voted to accept transfer of the Rev. Guy W. Meyer from the Maine Fellowship Committee.

Voted to transfer the fellowship of the Rev. Albert F. Ziegler to the Massachusetts Fellowship Committee.

Voted to issue a lay preacher's license to Mr. Harry T. Bardsley.

— HENRY H. SCHOOLEY, *Secretary*
December 30, 1958

CRACKLING

A burglar had entered a poor minister's house at midnight, was disturbed by the awakening of the occupant of the room he was in. Drawing his weapon, he said:

"If you stir you are a dead man. I'm hunting for your money."

"Let me get up and turn on the light," said the minister, "and I'll hunt with you."

— *The Watchman-Examiner*

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